

Interview with Joseph Pascoe at Carbondale Area High School

Social Studies Department offers students many different courses

By S. ROBERT POWELL

Who are the people who teach history at Carbondale Area High School? What courses do they teach? What are the textbooks that they use? In what ways are departments of history in present-day high schools similar to and different from departments of history in high schools of 20, or even 50, years ago?

To learn the answers to those questions, and others, I visited the Carbondale Area High School on Thursday morning, September 15, and spoke with Joseph Pascoe, Chairman of the Department of Social Studies, and with the six other social studies teachers at the school, namely, Lawrence Chesnick, John Molinaro, Christine Roscoe, Frank Wade, Loretta Wilczynski and Michael Yavorosky.

"In many respects, the social studies departments of today's high schools are similar to what used to be called history departments," Joseph Pascoe explained. He added: "The primary materials have remained largely the same. As teachers of history, it is our responsibility to present the history of man from prehistory up to and including the present, and much of the material is the same as the material that was taught in the past. We're always learning new material about the past, of course, but, by and large, it's the same material. What is different is the emphasis. As teachers of history, we are now concerned with the history of man in a broader context than many teachers of history were in the past,

which means that we now present the history of man as a study of sociology, anthropology, ethics, aesthetics, psychology and economics, for example, and that is why history departments are now called social studies departments."

Students at Carbondale Area High School must take a social studies course every year from seventh through eleventh grades, as must all seniors in the academic program. In seventh grade, the students take civics. The textbook that is being used this year by John Molinaro and Christine Roscoe in their classes is "Exploring American Citizenship." In the eighth grade, the students take American Culture I: From the Beginnings to 1865. The textbook that is being used this year by John Molinaro and Loretta Wilczynski is entitled "Rise of the American Nation, Volume I."

American Culture II: 1865 to the Present is taught in the ninth grade, and the textbook that Lawrence Chesnick and Loretta Wilczynski are using this year is entitled "Rise of the American Nation, Volume II." World Cultures I and II are taught in the tenth and eleventh grades, respectively. Joseph Pascoe and Michael Yavorosky teach this subject to the tenth grade students; Frank Wade, Lawrence Chesnick and Michael Yavorosky teach this subject to the eleventh grade students. The textbook used in entitled "Our Common Heritage."

Seniors who choose to take a social studies course--academic students must

take a social studies course--can elect to study: Problems of Democracy and Economics, Advanced Placement American History, or Psychology. Frank Wade teaches Problems of Democracy and Economics and the textbooks that are being used this year are Magruder's "American Government" and Lindholm and Driscoll's "Our American Economy." "The American Pageant" is the textbook that is used by Joseph Pascoe and Loretta Wilczynski in their Advanced Placement American History courses this year at Carbondale Area High School. Psychology is taught by Frank Wade, who uses the textbook "Invitation to Psychology" by Ragland and Saxon.

"Advanced Placement American History and Psychology are two social studies courses that were not taught years ago," Joseph Pascoe noted. He added: "Both of these courses can be very useful to the seniors as they prepare to go out into the world. Psychology is a new elective, and we are very pleased that our students have the option to study this important discipline. Advancement Placement American History is a college-level course that is open to seniors, who may receive college credits for the course if they score high enough in the placement exam that is given by the Princeton Testing Service in May. Carbondale Area graduates now attending Cornell

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FRANK WADE, SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER at Carbondale Area High School, teaching Problems of Democracy to his twelfth grade class. The seven social studies teachers at the school offer their students a wide variety of courses, including Advanced Placement American History and Psychology. (NEWS Photo)

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and Temple Universities have received college credits for their study of American History at our school, and we are sure that each year more and more students will be awarded college credits for their advanced placement studies at Carbondale Area High School."

We asked Joseph Pascoe how he believed that the Social Studies department could be made even better than it now is and he replied: "There are two ways the department could be enriched. First of all, if it were possible for the district to hire an Audio-Visual Coordinator, the students in the social studies department, as well as all students in the school, could be exposed to the enormous audio-visual resources that are available at the present time. That same coordinator could, at the same time, teach the students how to

use the audio-visual equipment that is owned by the district. Students in the Social Studies Department could then produce audio-visual programs on historical topics, and those programs would become components of the audio-visual holdings of the district for use by students and teachers in the years to come. A second way that the Social Studies Department could be enriched would be by the addition of specific units on local history to the present curriculum. I'm not sure that we should have a separate course on local history, but it would be nice if we could systematically present to the students the history of the Carbondale area. To teach those units on local history, I would like to bring into the school, as guest lecturers, the leading authorities on the topic of local history from the

Carbondale area."

At the conclusion of my visit to the Social Studies Department of the Carbondale Area High School, Joseph Pascoe and I spoke of the importance of the study of the past for all students, not only as a means of learning about the world that "was" but also as a means of learning about the world that "will be." In that regard, I am reminded of a statement made in 1901 by H.G. Wells in "The Discovery of the Future," namely: "The past is but the beginning of a beginning, and all that is and has been is but the twilight of the dawn. A day will come when beings who are now latent in our thoughts and hidden in our loins shall stand upon this earth as one stands upon a footstool, and shall laugh and reach out their hands amid the stars."

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